

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 2013-13-A - ORDER NO. 2014-451

JUNE 3, 2014

Application of Chem-Nuclear Systems, LLC,)	ORDER APPROVING
a Subsidiary of Energy Solutions Company,)	AND IDENTIFYING
for Adjustment in the Levels of Allowable)	ALLOWABLE COSTS
Costs and for Identification of Allowable)	
Costs)	

I. INTRODUCTION

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the “Commission”) by way of the Application of Chem-Nuclear Systems, LLC, a subsidiary of Energy Solutions Company (“Chem-Nuclear” or the “Company”), dated September 27, 2013 (the “Original Application”). By its Original Application, Chem-Nuclear sought an adjustment in the levels of certain allowable costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013, which the Commission had previously identified, and for the identification of allowable costs for Fiscal Year 2013-2014, all of which are associated with the operation of the Company’s regional low-level radioactive waste disposal facility located in the vicinity of Barnwell, South Carolina (the “Barnwell Facility”). The Application was submitted pursuant to the pertinent provisions of the Atlantic Interstate Low-level Radioactive Waste Compact Implementation Act (the “Act”), which is codified as S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-10, et. seq. (Rev. 2008 & Supp. 2013). On March 27, 2014, the Company filed and served an Amended Application and Exhibits which proposed certain revisions in the information contained in the Original Application to reflect the Company’s reconciliation

of certain issues with the Office of Regulatory Staff (“ORS”). Also on March 27, 2014, the Company filed and served the Direct Testimony of James D. Harris, reflecting the position of the Company as contained in the Amended Application and Exhibits.

The Act established a comprehensive economic regulatory program and governs the relationship between the State of South Carolina and operators of facilities for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste. Among other things, the Act provides for South Carolina’s membership in the Atlantic Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Compact Commission (the “Compact Commission”), and authorizes the manner in which South Carolina participates in the Compact Commission with the other two member states, Connecticut and New Jersey. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-20 (Rev. 2008).

The Act fixed a schedule of annually declining maximum volumes of low-level radioactive waste that a disposal facility in South Carolina may accept from generators within and without the Compact Commission’s member states. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(A)(6)(a) (Rev. 2008). Starting on July 1, 2008, the Barnwell Facility was limited to accepting waste exclusively from generators in South Carolina, New Jersey and Connecticut, the three Compact Commission states.

In addition, the Act empowered the South Carolina Budget and Control Board (the “Budget and Control Board”) to fix the rates that an operator of a disposal facility in South Carolina may charge generators for disposal of their low-level radioactive waste. The Act fixed fees for various purposes and provided for the disposition of revenues produced by the operation of disposal facilities subject to the Act. The Barnwell Facility

is the only disposal facility for low-level radioactive waste in South Carolina.

Under the Act, the Commission has the responsibility to identify the “allowable costs” of a disposal facility operator. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B)(1) (Rev. 2008). “Allowable costs” are “costs to a disposal site operator of operating a regional disposal facility,” and they “are limited to costs determined by standard accounting practices and regulatory findings to be associated with facility operations.” S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-30(1) (Rev. 2008). The Act provides that “allowable costs” expressly include the costs of certain specifically identified activities necessary in the operation of a low-level radioactive waste facility. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B)(3)(a) through (n) (Rev. 2008). Section 48-46-40(3) also provides that “allowable costs” include “any other costs directly associated with disposal operations determined by the PSC to be allowable.” The Act excludes from identification as “allowable costs” the costs of certain expressly listed activities “and other costs determined by the PSC to be unallowable.” S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B)(3) (Rev. 2008).

The Act entitles a disposal facility operator to recover an operating margin of twenty-nine percent (29%). This operating margin is authorized for the total amount of all identified “allowable costs,” excluding allowable costs for taxes, licensing, and permitting fees which the operator is required to remit to governmental entities. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B)(5) (Rev. 2008).

The level of “allowable costs” and the statutory operating margin affect the amount of annual revenue that a disposal facility operator remits to the State of South Carolina. At the end of the fiscal year, the operator pays the South Carolina Department

of Revenue an amount equal to the total revenue that the operator had received for waste disposal services during the fiscal year, reduced by the operator's identified "allowable costs," and reduced further by the twenty-nine percent (29%) statutory operating margin on the "allowable costs" under the Act, and reduced further by payments that the operator made during the fiscal year for reimbursement of certain administrative costs which the Budget and Control Board, the Commission, the State Treasurer, and the Compact Commission have incurred for the conduct of those agencies' functions in administering the Act. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-60(B) and (C) (Rev. 2008).

The Act provides that the operator of a low-level radioactive waste disposal site may apply to the Commission for adjustments in the levels of "allowable costs" which the Commission had identified for the previous fiscal year and for identification of costs which the Commission had not previously identified as "allowable costs." S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B)(4) (Rev. 2008). Upon disposition of the issues in an application, the Act requires the Commission to authorize the site operator to adjust its "allowable costs" for the current fiscal year to compensate the site operator for revenues "lost" during the previous fiscal year (that is, the difference between the level of "allowable costs" previously identified and the level of "allowable costs" identified upon approval of the application). Id.

Chem-Nuclear filed its Original and Amended Applications in this proceeding seeking to adjust the level of certain "allowable costs", which the Commission identified in Order No. 2013-349, and the amount of such costs that the Company actually experienced in the Fiscal Year 2012-2013. The Original and Amended Applications also

sought identification of the Company's "allowable costs" for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. Chem-Nuclear's Amended Application sought an adjustment or additional compensation for the Company for "allowable costs" incurred in Fiscal Year 2012-2013, as the actual costs specified in the Amended Application as irregular and vault costs were more than those identified and approved in Order No. 2013-349. Amended Application for Fiscal Year 2013-2014, ¶¶ 11-15 and Exhibit A to the Amended Application.

Upon receipt of the Company's Original Application, the Commission's Clerk's Office directed Chem-Nuclear to publish a Notice of Filing, advising the public of the submission of the Original Application and of the manner in which interested persons might intervene or otherwise participate in this proceeding. Chem-Nuclear filed affidavits of publication which demonstrated its compliance with the instructions of the Clerk's Office.

The Act specifies certain agencies to be parties of record in proceedings for identification of "allowable costs" before the Commission. Those parties are: the Budget and Control Board, the Executive Director of the ORS, and the Attorney General for the State of South Carolina. S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B)(9) (Rev. 2008). In addition, the Compact Commission and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control ("DHEC") have the discretion under the Act to participate as parties. *Id.* Pursuant to the provisions of S.C. Code Ann. § 58-4-10(B) (Rev. 2008), ORS represents "the public interest" in proceedings in this Docket.

Chem-Nuclear and ORS entered into a Settlement Agreement, dated April 8, 2014, by which they resolved various issues raised in the Original Application and during

the audit which ORS conducted. The Settlement Agreement was filed with the Commission on April 8, 2014, and was entered in the record of this proceeding as a part of Hearing Exhibit No. 1. That Exhibit also includes the “Examination Report for Docket No. 2013-13-A” (including Exhibits A and AA thereto) prepared by ORS and dated April 1, 2014.

On May 1, 2014, the Commission held an evidentiary hearing with respect to the issues in the Company’s Amended Application. The Honorable G. O’Neal Hamilton, Chairman, presided. David Butler, Esquire, served as Advisor to the Commission. Appearances were as follows: J. David Black, Esquire, represented Chem-Nuclear; Jeffrey M. Nelson, Esquire, represented ORS. There were no other Intervenor in this docket. A letter was filed with the Commission on April 30, 2014, by Jacquelyn S. Dickman, Esquire, of DHEC informing the Commission that DHEC did not plan to participate in the hearing but did reserve its position for future participation. The Budget and Control Board and South Carolina Attorney General’s Office did not appear or participate in the hearing.

At the hearing, Chem-Nuclear presented the testimony of one witness, James D. Harris, Chem-Nuclear’s Vice President for Barnwell Operations, who presented his testimony and answered questions from the Commission regarding the operation of the Barnwell Facility.

II. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

All of the issues relating to the identification of “allowable costs” for Fiscal Year

2012-2013 and for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 were resolved between the parties or were not contested in the evidence or positions of the parties. Consequently, the Commission will discuss the issues in general to reflect our reliance upon the evidentiary record for the findings and conclusions in this order.

A. “Allowable Costs” for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

In accordance with the provisions of the “Collaborative Review of Chem-Nuclear’s Operations and Efficiency Plan” (“OEP”), approved in Order No. 2004-349 for use in these “allowable cost” proceedings, Chem-Nuclear’s Original Application and Amended Application separated costs into three (3) categories: fixed, variable and irregular. See Amended Exhibit A to Chem-Nuclear’s Amended Application and Hearing Exhibit No. 1 (ORS Examination Report, Exhibit A). As recognized in Order No. 2004-349, the OEP was valid for use as a “baseline for establishing a method for identifying ‘allowable costs.’” Order No. 2004-349, p. 17.

1. Fixed Costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Chem-Nuclear separated its fixed costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 into several general categories: labor and fringe costs, non-labor costs, corporate allocation of general and administrative expense, equipment leases and support, depreciation, and insurance, as well as those fixed costs for which the statutory operating margin was not applicable. The Company’s operating expense for that period resulted in total fixed costs of \$2,864,976, which Chem-Nuclear actually incurred. Amended Application, ¶11 and Amended Exhibit A, p. 1. Since the total fixed costs incurred for 2012-2013 were (\$72,414) less than the level of fixed costs anticipated in Order No. 2013-349, the

Company did not request any adjustment to the identified allowable fixed costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. ORS Examination Report, Exhibit A; Amended Application Exhibit A, p. 1. The record supports the identification of \$2,864,976 as fixed “allowable costs” for Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

2. Variable Material Costs for Vaults for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

The actual costs for vaults are predicated on a number of factors, including the size and shape of waste packages and the number and size of vaults required for disposal. For Fiscal Year 2012-2013, Chem-Nuclear’s actual cost for disposal vaults was \$485,729. Hearing Exhibit No. 1, Attachment A, Exhibit A. This amount is \$115,053 more than the \$370,676 variable costs calculated using the rates established in Order No. 2013-349. The evidence supports treatment of the \$485,729 of these actual costs as “allowable.”

3. Variable Labor Costs and Non-Labor Costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Order No. 2013-349 determined various categories of rates applicable to the following: purchase, inspection and placement of disposal vaults, handling of the various classes of waste shipments, slit trench offload operations, customer assistance, and scheduling of waste shipments and maintenance of disposal records. Amended Application, Amended Exhibit A, p. 2. The Company incurred actual variable labor and non-labor costs of \$123,917 in Fiscal Year 2012-2013, which the Company has requested to be included in this category of costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. Id. This amount is \$10,386 less than the amount that had been anticipated based on rates provided in

Commission Order 2013-349. The Company therefore requests no adjustment in this category of costs. The record supports treatment of actual variable and non-labor costs of \$123,917 as “allowable.”

4. Irregular Costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Irregular costs include costs for projects that are nonrecurring annually or varying costs for projects which continue for more than a year. This category includes, but is not limited to, costs associated with trench design, site engineering, site assessment, and license renewal and appeal costs. See, Hearing Exhibit No. 1, Attachment A, Exhibit A, pg. 2 of 2. The record contains descriptions of each project and the actual costs that Chem-Nuclear incurred for them in Fiscal Year 2012-2013. Id., Amended Application, Amended Exhibit B. The evidence in the record establishes that Chem-Nuclear incurred actual irregular costs for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 of \$240,438. Amended Application, Amended Exhibit A and Hearing Exhibit No. 1, Exhibit A to Attachment A. The record supports treatment of actual irregular costs for fiscal year 2012-2013 of \$240,438 as “allowable.”

B. Proposed “Allowable Costs” for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Chem-Nuclear’s Amended Application and the evidence in the record presented “allowable costs” to be identified for Fiscal Year 2013-2014, separated into the three (3) cost categories that were described in the Collaborative Review of the OEP and adopted in Order No. 2004-349.

1. Allowable Fixed Costs for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Chem-Nuclear proposed fixed costs of \$3,319,732 to be identified as “allowable

costs” for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. That amount was based on costs incurred in the first half of Fiscal Year 2013-2014 and activities anticipated for the second half of the Fiscal Year. Amended Application, Amended Exhibit C and Hearing Exhibit No. 1, Attachment A, Exhibit AA.

2. Allowable Irregular Costs for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Chem-Nuclear’s Amended Application includes general categories of projects with estimated total costs of \$233,250, which it categorized as irregular costs for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. These irregular costs, identified in Second Amended Exhibit C to the Amended Application, are based on costs incurred in the first half of Fiscal Year 2013-2014 and activities anticipated for the second half of the Fiscal Year.

3. Variable Material Cost (Vaults) Rates for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

For Fiscal Year 2013-2014, Chem-Nuclear proposed variable material cost rates for each category of waste received based upon the rates which the Commission had approved in Order No. 2013-349 for Fiscal Year 2012-2013, as adjusted for changes in the cost of concrete disposal vaults from Chem-Nuclear’s supplier. Amended Application, Amended Exhibit C.

4. Variable Labor and Non-Labor Rates for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

For Fiscal Year 2013-2014, Chem-Nuclear proposed rates for variable labor and non-labor costs. Amended Application, Amended Exhibit C. Those rates pertained to five (5) categories: vault purchase and inspection (per vault); ABC waste disposal (per shipment); Slit Trench Waste Operations (per offload); customer assistance (per shipment); and maintenance of trench records (per container). The rates for vault

purchase and inspection, ABC waste disposal, slit trench operations, customer assistance, and maintenance of records were based on the rates which were approved in Order No. 2013-349, adjusted to more accurately reflect actual costs. During the course of its examination, ORS determined that the 2013-2014 Slit Trench (per slit trench offload) cost of \$83,334 was excessive. In discussions with the Company, and based on more accurate and up to date cost estimates obtained by the Company, the parties agreed that the \$83,334 number contained in the Amended Application should be reduced to \$40,000. This compromise number is reflected in the Settlement Agreement. Hearing Exhibit 1.

III. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The Public Service Commission of South Carolina is authorized and directed by S.C. Code Ann. § 48-46-40(B), et seq. (Rev. 2008 & Supp. 2013) to identify allowable costs for Chem-Nuclear's operation of a regional low-level radioactive waste disposal facility in South Carolina. The facility is located in Barnwell, South Carolina.

2. Chem-Nuclear has operated the disposal site continuously since 1971 without interruptions. Undisputed amounts in Chem-Nuclear's accounts that will herein be identified and approved by this Commission as "allowable costs" for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 are included in *Appendix A*, which is attached to this Order.

3. Further, we approve and identify as "allowable costs" for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 the individual figures and the sum of \$3,552,982 in fixed and irregular costs, as reflected in *Appendix B*, which is attached to this Order.

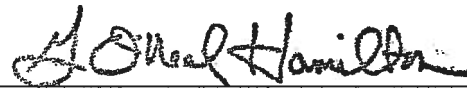
4. We further approve the variable cost rates for Fiscal Year 2013-2014, as

those costs and rates are depicted in *Appendix B*, which is attached to this Order. The actual expense in the variable cost category will be dependent on the actual volumes and classes of waste received. The rates in *Appendix B* are appropriately documented and supported by evidence in the record of this proceeding.

5. Chem-Nuclear shall continue to submit monthly reports of variable cost data to the Commission as required by Commission Order No. 2001-499.

6. This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



G. O'Neal Hamilton, Chairman

ATTEST:



Nikiya Hamilton, Vice Chairman

(SEAL)

APPENDIX A – Order No. 2014-451
Docket No. 2013-13-A
June 3, 2014
Page 1 of 2
Chem-Nuclear Systems, LLC
Allowable Costs
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2013

<u>Description</u>	<u>Allowable Cost</u>
Fixed Costs	
Fixed Labor, Fringe and Non-Labor Costs	\$1,787,809
Depreciation	\$74,730
Insurance	\$352,361
Equipment Leases and Support	\$90,435
Corporate G&A	\$527,587
Legal Support*	<u>\$32,054</u>
Total Fixed Costs	\$2,864,976
Variable Costs	
Vault Costs	\$485,729
Variable Labor and Fringe**	<u>\$123,917</u>
Total Variable Costs	\$609,646
Irregular Costs	
Total Irregular Costs	<u>\$240,438</u>
Total Allowable Costs	<u><u>\$3,715,060</u></u>

* Not subject to statutory operating margin.

**Categories of costs include: Vault Purchase and Inspection, ABC Waste Disposal, Slit Trench Operations, Waste Acceptance and Trench Records.

APPENDIX A – Order No. 2014-451
Docket No. 2013-13-A
June 3, 2014
Page 2 of 2
Chem-Nuclear Systems, LLC
Allowable Costs
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2013

<u>Irregular Cost Item</u>	<u>Labor & Fringe</u>	<u>Non Labor</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Various Trenches	\$14,901	\$126,107	\$141,008
License Renewal and Appeal	\$644	\$0	\$644
Decontamination & Corrective Actions	\$4,983	\$37	\$5,020
Trench Records Software	\$993	\$18,027	\$19,020
Site Maintenance	\$5,316	\$28,899	\$34,215
Severance/Incentive	\$40,157	\$0	\$40,157
Other Irregular Costs	\$374	\$0	\$374
<u>Total Irregular Costs</u>	<u>\$67,368</u>	<u>\$173,070</u>	<u>\$240,438</u>

APPENDIX B – Order No. 2014-451
Docket No. 2013-13-A
June 3, 2014
Page 1 of 1
Chem-Nuclear Systems, LLC
Allowable Costs
Fiscal Year 2013-2014 (Ending June 30, 2014)

<u>Description</u>	<u>Allowable Cost</u>
Fixed Costs	
Labor and Fringe and Non-Labor	\$2,075,258
Depreciation	\$76,972
Insurance	\$352,509
Equipment Leases and Support	\$191,200
Corporate Allocation (Management Fee/G&A)	\$590,777
Legal Support*	\$33,016
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Total Fixed Costs	\$3,319,732
Irregular Costs	
Trench Construction	\$96,250
License Appeal	\$10,000
Corrective Action	\$5,000
Site Engineering Drawings	\$97,000
Site Assessments	\$5,000
Miscellaneous	\$20,000
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Total Irregular Costs	\$233,250
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Total Fixed and Irregular Costs	\$3,552,982
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Variable Costs	
<u>Variable Labor and Non-Labor Rates</u>	
Vault Purchase and Inspection (per vault)	\$156.21
ABC Waste Disposal (per shipment)	\$1,190.82
Slit Trench Shipment (per offload)	\$40,000.00
Customer Assistance (per shipment)	\$93.94
Trench Records (per container)	\$261.14
<u>Variable Material Costs (Vault Costs)</u>	
Class A Waste (per cubic foot)	\$37.34
Class B Waste (per cubic foot)	\$48.47
Class C Waste (per cubic foot)	\$52.15
Slit Trench Waste (per cubic foot)	\$210.00

* Not subject to statutory operating margin